

Integrity, Honesty, Courtesy, Honor by *Mark Atkinson*

Even with all their adornments and riches, a nobleman and a wealthy tycoon lack character and substance if they do not possess these traits. Integrity, honesty, courtesy, and honor must be consistently applied in every circumstance or activity, and in every interaction from the most casual dialog with one's child to the most formal interactions at work. Years of upholding such traits add character value to one self. On the other hand, the moment we disengage these traits is the moment we lose value as a person. Squandering opportunities to demonstrate these traits is somewhat like investing poorly – one cannot easily undo a loss of principal....or principle. Do the right thing (for the right reason), not as a matter of convenience or to exploit an opportunity for personal gain.

Taekwondo can help instill these traits in our children by exercising their character in class, just as they exercise their body. Examples of exercising these traits are showing respect & courtesy to teachers and fellow students regardless of rank or ability, being truthful & above reproach in every interaction, and helping classmates in need of support, whether in the form of encouragement or assistance with a technique of the art.

The responsibility to teach these traits by example weighs heavily on black belts, just as it does on parents, teachers, and government leaders. The black belt is a symbol of experience, skill, and consistency. It is inevitable that young students of Taekwondo will look to the black belts as mentors or even as authority figures. Just as we wear our uniform and black belt, we must also wear the traits of integrity, honesty, courtesy, and honor.

“in•teg•ri•ty”

1 : firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values : [INCORRUPTIBILITY](#) 2 : an unimpaired condition : [SOUNDNESS](#) 3 : the quality or state of being complete or undivided : [COMPLETENESS](#)
synonyms see [HONESTY](#)

Definition Reference:

“integrity” *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*. 2009. Merriam-Webster Online.
<<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/integrity>> (28 May 2009)